

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 LISBON 0644

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SUBJ: PORTUGAL'S PARTIES FACE THE FUTURE: SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
CENTER PARTY AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATCS

REF: (A) LISBON 261 (DTG 14107Z JAN 76), (B) LISBON 143
(DTG 090645Z JAN 76)

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE IS ONE OF A SERIES COMMENTING ON THE
STATUS OF THE LEADING PORTUGUESE POLITICAL PARTIES PRIOR TO THE
1976 ELECTIONS (REFTELS). THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY (CDS)
SHOULD MAKE SUBSTANTIAL ELECTORAL GAINS AND WILL PROBABLY PARTICIPATE
IN ANY POST-ELECTION GOVERNMENT. IT IS TYPIFIED BY A YOUNG
AND CAPABLE LEADERSHIP AND BY ITS DEFENSE OF THE FREE ENTER-
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PRISE SYSTEM. THE RISE OF THE CDS IS AN INDICATION THAT
PORTUGAL IS MOVING TOWARD A POLITICAL SPECTRUM TYPICAL OF

A WESTERN EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MINUSCULE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY LIES PRIMARILY IN ITS ROLE AS A POLITICAL LIGHTNING ROD TO THE RIGHT OF THE CDS. END SUMMARY

I. BACKGROUND:

(A) THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY (CENTRO DEMOCRATICO SOCIAL - CDS) IS THE PARTY WHICH STANDS TO GAIN THE MOST IN FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS. THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PORTUGAL HAS ALTERED GREATLY SINCE EARLY 1975 WHEN THE POLITICAL RIGHT WAS TOTALLY DISCREDITED AND ALL MAJOR PARTIES WERE CROWDING INTO THE LEFT SIDE OF AN UNBALANCED POLITICAL SPECTRUM. EVEN THE CDS -- WHICH THEN HARDLY MERITED THE CLASSIFICATION OF A "MAJOR PARTY" -- WAS AT PAINS TO EMPHASIZE ITS "CENTER" ORIENTATION IN THE 1975 CAMPAIGN. NEVERTHELESS THE CDS WAS IDENTIFIED AS THE PARTY FARTHEST TO THE RIGHT IN THE 1975 ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. AS SUCH, IT BORE THE BRUNT OF WIDESPREAD ATTACKS. ITS NATIONAL CONGRESS HELD IN OPORTO IN JANUARY 1975 WAS THE SCENE OF A MAJOR CIVIL DISTURBANCE, POORLY CONTROLLED BY THE MILITARY, AND HAD TO BE SUSPENDED. CDS RALLIES WERE SO REGULARLY SUBJECTED TO HARASSMENT THAT THEY WERE NORMALLY HELD INDOORS IN THEATERS OR HALLS. BESIEGING DEMONSTRATORS HELD PARTICIPANTS AT ONE RALLY, IN THE NORTHERN TOWN OF GUIMARAES, PRISONERS OVERNIGHT.

(B) IT IS INDISPUTABLE, HOWEVER, THAT IN EARLY 1975 THE CDS WAS POPULARLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE "OLD REGIME," AND UNREPENTANT "FASCISTS" WHO UNAPOLOGETICALLY DEFENDED DISCREDITED VALUES. THE SHIFT OF PUBLIC ATTITUDE MAKING THE CDS AN ACCEPTABLE PARTY IS DUE IN PART TO THE REVOLUTIONARY EXCESSES OF THE PCP AND LEFTIST ELEMENTS WITHIN THE AFM. TO A LARGER DEGREE, IT IS DUE TO THE ABILITY AND COURAGE OF CDS LEADERS, MOST NOTABLY SECRETARY-GENERAL FREITAS DO AMARAL.

(C) IN SPITE OF HARASSMENT, THE CDS OBTAINED 433,000 VOTES IN THE APRIL, 1975, ELECTIONS, 7.65 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL. IT ELECTED 16 DEPUTIES TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, ALL FROM DISTRICTS IN THE OPORTO CONSULAR AREA, EXCEPT FOR THREE FROM LISBON AND ONE FROM THE NORTH-CENTRAL DISTRICT OF LEIRIA.
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(D) IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, THE CDS HAS COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH BOTH THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) AND THE POPULAR DEMOCRATS (PPD). THE THREE PARTIES' VIEWS HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY CONSISTENT THAT IN MOST CASES CONSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL COULD BE ACHIEVED. THE ONE SECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION WHERE THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE WAS THE PART DEALING WITH ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. HERE, SURPRISINGLY, IT WAS THE PPD WHO TOOK THE LEAD IN OPPOSING SOCIALIST-SPONSORED PROPOSALS. THIS IN PART MAY HAVE BEEN

DUE TO THE PPD'S GREATER REPRESENTATION IN THE ASSEMBLY. THE CDS MAY ALSO HAVE FELT THAT TOO ADMANT ADVOCACY OF "CAPITALISTIC" ECONOMIC MEASURES WOULD PRODUCE A COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE REACTION.

2. NOVEMBER 25 COUP: THE NOVEMBER 25 ABORTIVE COUP WAS AN UNEXPECTED WINDFALL FOR THE CDS. THE LURCH TO THE LEFT FOLLOWING NOV 25 OPENED THE ROAD TO CDS RESPECTABILITY AND LEGITIMACY. NOW, CDS FEELS IT HAS GOOD CHANCE OF OPERATING AS NORMAL PARTY AND TO BRING BACK CDS VOTES THAT IN 1975 ELECTIONS WENT TO PS AS ONLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNIST THREAT.

3. LEADERSHIP AND POLICY:

(A) ONE OF THE MAJOR REASONS FOR THE MARKEDLY INCREASED POPULAR ACCEPTANCE OF THE CDS HAS BEEN THE EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY OF ITS PRESIDENT, DIOGO FREITAS DO AMARAL. HE WAS SELECTED BY PRESIDENT SPINOLA AS ONE OF SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND SERVED UNTIL THAT BODY WAS REPLACED BY THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IN MARCH 1975. THE DEBATING ABILITY OF FREITAS DO AMARAL IS WIDELY ADMIRER. HIS ROUTE OF PRO-PCP INTERVIEWERS DURING A TELEVISED DEBATE DURING THE LATTER DAYS OF THE GONCALVES GOVERNMENTS WAS A MATTER FOR NATIONAL COMMENT. AN INDICATION THAT HIS POPULARITY EXTENDS BEYOND THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CDS ITSELF IS THAT IN A POLL BY THE INFLUENTIAL NEWSPAPER "TEMPO" REPORTING THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR VARIOUS CANDIDATES FOR PRIME MINISTER, FREITAS DO AMARAL DREW MORE VOTES THAN EITHER THE PPD'S SA CARNEIRO OR MARIO SOARES OF THE PS. WHILE THE POLL DID NOT CLAIM TO BE REPRESENTATIVE, AND WAS POSSIBLY CONFIDENTIAL
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SUBJECT TO BOTH INTENTIONAL AND UNINTENTIONAL SLANTING, IT IS INDICATIVE OF A SURPRISING DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR FREITAS DO AMARAL.

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(B) ALTHOUGH LACKING LEADERSHIP DEPTH, THE CDS HAS A NUMBER OF HIGHLY CAPABLE LEADERS. ADELINO AMARO DA COSTA MOVED UP TO VICE PRESIDENT WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF BASILIO

RTA AS SECRETARY-GENERAL IN JANUARY. BOTH OF THESE MEN SHARE TRAITS COMMON TO MANY CS OFFICIALS. LIKE FREITAS DO AMARAL, THEY ARE IN THEIR EARLY 30'S, HIGHLY ARTICULATE, WELL EDUCATED, UPPER MIDDLE CLASS, AND UNABASHED ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONSERVATIVES.

(C) AIR FORCE GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO POSES A PROBLEM FOR THE CDS. ON ONE HAND, THE GENERAL, NOW ON "EXTENDED LEAVE," IS A CROWD-PLEASER WHOSE DASHING IMAGE AND POPULIST APPEAL OFFERS
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THE CDS THE PSSIBILITY OF POPULAR SUPPORT. THE GENERAL HAS UNDENIED PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS AND HAS PRIVATELY INDICATED AN EXPECTATION THAT BROADLY BASED CIVILIAN AND MILITARY GROUPS MAY PROPOSE HIS NOMINATION. HE CURRENTLY CLAIMS HE WOULD OT RUN IF PROPOSED BY THE CDS ALONE. IT IS NOTWORTHY THAT GALVAO DE MELO IS NOT FORMALLY AFFILIATED WITH THE PARTY, AND IS SERVING IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSMBLY AS AN "INDEPENDENT" ELECTED ON THE CDS SLATE. CDS LEADERS HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT THEY BELIEVE GALVAO DE MELO BE SATISIFED WITH THE POSITION OF CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES AND

THAT THEY BELIEVE THIS IS THE HIGHEST POSITON FOR WHICH HE IS SUITED. THEY HAVE EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS REGARDING GALVAO DE MELO'S INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY, HIS PLAYBOY REPUTATION, AND THE NON-SUITABILITY OF HIS GERMAN-BORN WIFE, WITH WHOME HE RECENTLY LEGALIZED A LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIP. PARTY EADERS INDICATE THEY COULD SUPPORT PINHEIRO DE AZEVEDO FOR THE PRESIDENCY. LTC FIRMINO MIGUEL WOULD PROBABLY BE A MORE COMPATIBLE CANDIDATE FOR THE CDS, BUT HE LACKS A NATIONAL IMAGE. IT IS STILL POSSIBLE THAT GALVAO DE MELO'S CANDIDACY MAY GENERATE ENOUGH MOMENTUM TO SWEEP THE PARTY ALONG. PRESIDENT FREITAS DO AMARAL SAID JAN 27 THAT BEST THING FOR THREE DEMOCRATIC PARTIEIS WOULD BE TO SELECT A JOINT CANDIDATE. HOWEVER, HE DOUBTED IF PS COULD GET TOGETHER WIH CDS ON A CANDIATE.

(D) ATTITUDE TOWARD AND PARTICIPATION IN VI GOVERNMENT: CDS HAS THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS IN THAT IT CAN, AND HAS, STRONGLY OF THE OPPOSITION, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SUPPORTING IN FACT MANNY OF THESE SAME MEASURE. THE CDS ALSO HAS MADE A POINT OF CLAIMING THE RIGHT OF PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPAL COUNCILS IN THOSE AREAS WHERE IT RECEIVED SIGNIFICANT PROPORTIONS OF THE VOTE.

4. THE PARTY AND THE MILITARY:

(C) THE CDS, AS THE MOST CONSERVATIVE PARTY, HAD UNTIL RECENTLY ONLY STRAINED -- OR AT BEST, CAREFULLY CORRECT -- RELATIONS WITH AN ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT VOCIFEROUSLY COMMITTED TO LEADING PORTUGAL TO SOCIALISM. SINCE THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT TOOK OFFICE, AND PARTICULARLY SINCE THE ABORTIVE LEFTISTCOUP OF NOV 25, RELATIONS WITH THE MILITARY HAVE MARKEDLY IMPROVED, ALBEIT STILL ON A LOW

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KEY BASIS. CDS SECRETARY-GENERAL HORTA IS A COUSIN BY MARRIAGE OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF EANES AND THE TWO MEN GET ALONG WELL. EANES HAS TOLD HORTA THAT THE MILITARY IS SEEKING A PARTY THAT CAN LEAD PORTUGAL, AND HIS VIEWS SEEM SYMPATHETIC TO THOSE OF THE CDS.

(B) WITH REGARD TO THE NEGOTIATONS FOR A NEW PACT BETWEEN THE POLITICAL PARTIEIS AND THE ARMED FORCEEE MOVEMENT, CDS LEADERS HAVE REPEATEDLY POINTED OUT THAT THEY WERE THE FIRST TO CALL FOR A REVISION. THEIR POSITION ON THE PACT IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE PPD, CALLING FOR A LIMITED, CONSTITUTIONALLY DEFINED ROLE FOR THE MILITARY AS THE GUARANTORS OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES, BUT SUBSERVIENT TO AN ELECTEDCIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. THE CDS HAS CALLED FOR A PUBLIC COMMITMENT FROM THE MLITARY THAT IT WIL GUARANTEE THAT THE RESULTS OF THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS WILL BE OSERVED, REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME.

5. THE PARTY AND THE ECONOMY:

IN PORTUGUESE POLITICS, CONSISTENCY IS A PRIZED VIRTUE. IN THIS RESPECT THE CDS HAS A NOTABLE ADVANTAGE OVER ITS PRIME RIVAL, THE PPD. EVEN DURING THE PEAK PERIODS OF LEFTIST SUPREMACY DURING THE GONCALVES GOVERNMENTS, THE CDS MAINTAINED THAT IT WAS THE ONLY NON-SOCIALIST PARTY IN PORTUGAL. DEFENSE OF THE CAPITALISTIC SYSTEM, INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE, AND PRIVATE PROPERTY HAS BEEN A CORNERSTONE OF PARTY POLICY. FREITAS DO AMARAL HAS BASED MUCH OF HIS EARLY CAMPAIGN FOR THE 1976 ELECTIONS ON ATTACKS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE. HE ARGUES THAT THE SOLUTION TO PORTUGAL'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WILL NOT BE FOUND UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT RESOLVES WHETHER IT IS OR IS NOT A PARTY OF THE WESTERN EUROPEAN SYSTEM. CDS MAINTAINS THAT THE ONLY SHORT-TERM WAY OF REDUCING THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DEFICIT IS BY A MASSIVE REDUCTION OF IMPORTS, BUT THAT THIS IS POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE. AN ALTERNATIVE IS TO BOOST FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS BY REVIVING THE TOURIST INDUSTRY AND PROVIDING GUARANTEES FOR EMIGRANT REMITTANCES. IN THIS RESPECT, THE CDS STRONGLY CRITICIZES THE FOREIGN POLICY OF MELO ANTUNES, SAYING HIS PREDILECTION FOR CURTING THE THIRD WORLD IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND THE ONLY SOLUTION IS CLOSE ECONOMIC TIES WITH

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THE WEST.

6. FUTURE PROSPECTS: THE CDS IS BULLISH. PARTY LEADERS STATE PRIVATELY THAT IN THE 1976 ELECTIONS THEY EXPECT TO OBTAIN FROM 20 TO 25 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, AND WILL COMPETE WITH THE SOCIALISTS FOR SECOND PLACE BEHIND THE PPD. THEY ARE CONFIDENT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT AND SEVERAL NORTHERN LEADERS ARE EVEN TOYING WITH THE IDEA OF FORMING A GOVERNMENT COMPOSED SOLELY OF THE PPD AND CDS. EVEN IN THE PCP STRONGHOLD OF THE ALENTEJO, A CDS COMMITTEE IS BEING FORMED IN MONTEMOR-O-NOVO AND CDS YOUTHS ARE PASSING OUT PARTY LITERATURE IN EVORA, SOMETHING UNTHINKABLE SIX MONTHS EARLIER.

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(B) NATIONAL LEADERS OF THE CDS ARE REALISTIC ENOUGH TO SEE THAT ANY GOVERNMENT WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE THE SOCIALISTS WOULD NOT BE VIAKBLE, AND TO REALIZE THE DANGER OF PUSHING THE PS INTO THE OPPOSITION ALONG WITH THE PCP. HOWEVER, IT IS A SIGN THAT PORTUGAL IS MOVING TOWARD A POLITICAL SPECTRUM TYPICAL OF OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN DEMOCRACIES THAT SUCH A POSSIBILITY CAN EVEN BE CONSIDERED.

(C) CDS LEADERS BELIEVES THAT THEIR PARTY, WITH ITS FORMAL TIES TO THE EUROPEAN UNION OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, HAS THE PRESTIGE -- AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT -- OF INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION WHICH THE PPD LACKS. THEY ALSO ARGUE THAT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CDS ADHERES MORE CLOSELY TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LINE THAN DOES THE PPD. APPEALING ESSENTIALLY TO THE SAME SECTOR OF THE ELECTORATE, CDS BELIEVES AND HOPES THE PPD WILL EVENTUALLY DISINTEGRATE DUE TO ITS PERSONALISTIC ORIGIN, WHILE THEY AND THE SOCIALISTS WILL BE THE TWO DOMINANT PARTIES.

7. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY:

(A) THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PARTIDO DE DEMOCRACIA CRISTA -PDC), WHICH HAD PUT A JOINT SLATE WITH THE CDS IN THE 1975 ELECTIONS, IS SOMETIMES JOKINGLY CALLED NEITHER CHRISTIAN, DEMOCRATIC, NOR A PARTY. THE PDC IS NOW TAINTED WITH A KIND OF "ORIGINAL SIN" AS ITS FOUNDER AND DYNAMIC LEADER, MAJOR SANCHES OSORIO, FLED PORTUGAL IN THE CONFUSED AFTERMATH OF THE MARCH 11 RIGHTIST COUP ATTEMPT. HE IS NOW LIVING IN PARIS WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN. PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD RECENT CONTACT WITH OSORIO, A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF SPINOLA, STATE IT IS UNLIKELY HE WILL RETURN TO PORTUGAL IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

(B) AS A RESULT OF THE ALLEGED COMPLICITY OF THE PDC IN EVENTS OF MARCH 11, THE PARTY WAS DENIED PARTICIPATION IN THE 1975 ELECTIONS BUT WAS NOT DISBANDED. THE PARTY MAY PRESENT CANDIDATES FOR THE 1976 ELECTIONS, BUT IT HAS NEARLY INSURMOUNTABLE HANDICAPS TO OVERCOME. EVEN PRIOR TO THE 1975 ELECTIONS, WHEN THE PDC AND THE CDS HAD FORMED AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE, THE PDC WAS HARD-PRESSED TO COME UP WITH 88 CANDIDATES. WITH THE ADDED BURDEN OF A FUGITIVE FOUNDER AND A NEWLY ELECTED LACKLUSTER LEADERSHIP, THE PARTY'S APPEAL IS LIMITED. THE NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL IS DR. SILVA RESENDE, A LAWYER AND FORMER EDITOR OF A WEEKLY SPORTS NEWSPAPER.

(C) STILL ANOTHER HANDICAP FOR THE PDC IS THAT THE CDS IS OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AS ITS AFFILIATE IN PORTUGAL, EFFECTIVELY PREEMPTING PDC SUPPORT FROM THIS SOURCE.

(D) THE EXISTENCE OF THE PDC, HOWEVER, IS IMPORTANT POLITICALLY AS IT PROVIDES A GROUP ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE TO THE RIGHT OF THE CDS. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS FACT IS NOT LOST UPON CDS LEADERS, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHO PRIVATELY ADMIT THAT THEY HAVE PROVIDED ASSISTANCE FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF THE PDC. WHILE SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE PDC COULD DRAW SUPPORT FROM THE CDS. THAT PARTY ITSELF PREFERS TO HAVE ANOTHER GROUP TO ITS RIGHT WHICH CAN ACT AS A POLITICAL LIGHTNING ROD. CARLUCCI

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